
Reading Policy

The Background:

Reading is fundamental to all learning and life long success. All teachers K-12 must have the knowledge, skills and resources to provide reading instruction to help students use and improve reading skills and provide for improved content area learning. The Board approved new reading standards required for licensing K-12 teachers including special educators. Reading is cited as a key initiative in the FY 2006 Master Plan.

In April 2004, the Department of Education undertook the organization of a panel of educators to review current reading research and to make recommendations for the teaching of reading in Tennessee. The panel is composed of classroom teachers, administrators, supervisors, and representatives of higher education and the board.

The committee developed recommendations regarding current scientifically-based research findings and best practices to include in the report. These recommendations are consistent with federal law, scientifically based research and best practice.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education and SBE staff recommend this policy on first reading.

Tennessee Reading Policy

**Draft
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Tennessee Reading Policy

The Tennessee Reading Panel developed a comprehensive, cohesive reading program for all educational institutions in the state of Tennessee. The program is consistent with the recommendations of the report of the National Reading Panel, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, current research in reading and best practice. The overall goal is to inform and improve instruction and to help all students in Tennessee become successful readers.

The Tennessee policy addresses the five student rights to excellent literacy instruction. The International Reading Association encourages states to adopt and implement effective literacy instruction for all children. Those rights are:

Students have the right to be taught reading by certified teachers who have taken two or more courses in the teaching of reading and/or who have demonstrated their proficiency in the teaching of reading. These certified teachers keep their skills up to date through effective professional development. The state or province requires reading courses for all teachers K-12 or requires that all K-12 teachers show proficiency in the teaching of reading. The state or province requires ongoing professional development for teachers.

Students who struggle as readers have the right to receive additional help from qualified reading specialists. The state or province supports reading professionals/specialists, provides or supports intervention programs for struggling readers at all grade levels, and has state- or provincial-level staff positions specifically dedicated to the promotion of reading.

The commitment of the state or province is evident in attention to student reading achievement, for example, through support for second language learners, support for the development of home/school partnerships, state or provincial initiatives, analyses of multiple measures of reading performance, development of state or provincial standards, and the provision of support to local districts.

Students have a right of access to a wide variety of books and other reading materials in classroom and school library media centers. Students have a right as well to access technology that will enhance their reading achievement. The state/province or nation provides ample support for building and maintaining good collections in classrooms and school library media centers. The state or province provides access to technology to all students, including those in schools in low-income communities.

Students have the right to be taught beginning reading through methods chosen on the basis of their needs as learners. The state or province encourages the use of multiple methods in beginning reading, with methods selected on the basis of students' needs in learning to read, and does not mandate the use of one particular method.

Students have the right to reading assessment with multiple methods that provide information about their strengths and needs as learners, involve them in making decisions about their own learning, and lead to clear implications for instruction. The state or province uses multiple measures of reading achievement and does not rely only on standardized tests or use single test scores to make promotion, placement, or graduation decisions.

To ensure the prevention and correction of reading difficulties in the five essential areas as well as improving reading instruction for all students, districts and schools must adopt a three-tier reading model for reading instruction.

The Three Tier Model

Tier I addresses the needs for the majority of students. Using flexible grouping and targeting specific skills, classroom teachers are provided with the training and the tools they need. (a) a core reading program based on scientific reading research, (b) benchmark testing of students to determine instructional needs at least three times per year (fall, winter and spring), and (c) ongoing professional development to provide teachers with the necessary tools to ensure every student receives quality reading instruction.

Tier II addresses the needs of those students where focused instruction within the classroom is not enough. These students require additional instruction beyond the usual time allotted for core reading instruction. Tier II gives the students an additional thirty minutes of intensive small-group reading instruction daily. The aim is to support and reinforce skills being taught by the classroom teacher.

Tier III addresses the small percentage of students who have received Tier II instruction and continue to show marked difficulty in acquiring necessary reading skills. These students require instruction that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically meets their individual needs. It is suggested students at this level receive an additional thirty minutes can be provided for the students.

Focused Service Groups

The following service groups must provide services to develop and sustain quality reading instruction:

- Professional Development
- Leadership, Advocacy and Public Support
- Family/Community Partnerships
- Teacher Preparation Through Higher Education

Recommendations of the Tennessee Reading Panel

The Tennessee Reading Panel suggests the following:

1. Offer the content of Reading First Cadre Training to IHE teacher educators in order to better prepare future teacher candidates in the areas of literacy.
2. Share the content of Reading First Professional Development that is presently offered to recipients of the Reading First Grant (2003) with all K-3 schools.
3. Implement a systemic plan to continuously monitor the progress of students to determine reading proficiency in the five essential components of reading at all levels using assessment data.
4. Base reading instruction on appropriate Scientifically-Based Reading Research (SBRR) assessment data at all levels as well as on a strong understanding of the way students learn by establishing a comprehensive and coordinated K-12 literacy program through the creation of teacher teams that meet regularly to align and plan instruction across the curriculum.
5. Implement a comprehensive and coordinated K-12 literacy program supported by access to a variety of adequate resources including licensed reading specialists, trained literacy coaches, trained paraprofessionals, appropriate materials, and on-going professional development.
6. Provide a daily minimum of 90 minutes or more of uninterrupted, direct, and explicit reading instruction using a comprehensive SBRR program that systematically and effectively includes the five essential elements of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), taught appropriately per grade level.
7. Adopt the 3-Tier Reading Model with an intense daily intervention program to meet the needs of all students.
8. Use SBRR methods, programs, and materials for instruction, remediation, and practice.
9. Use SBRR assessments to inform instruction and determine flexible grouping through ongoing progress monitoring.
10. Integrate reading standards in all 7-12 licensure areas.

11. Support and encourage collaboration among IHEs, LEAs, and other agencies or organizations (e.g., TACTE, TAILACTE, TRA) to continue to conduct research in the area of student achievement of their teacher candidates.
12. Establish a literacy network and on-line clearinghouse that distributes, disseminates, and promotes information concerning existing programs and support systems to school districts throughout Tennessee.
13. Focus on the fifteen elements of effective Adolescent Literacy Programs listed in the “Reading Next” report which include:
 - Direct, explicit comprehension instruction
 - Effective instructional principles embedded in content
 - Motivation and self-directed learning
 - Text-based collaborative learning
 - Strategic tutoring
 - Diverse texts
 - Intensive writing
 - A technology component
 - Ongoing formative assessment of students
 - Extended time for literacy
 - Professional development
 - Ongoing summative assessment
 - Teacher teams
 - Leadership
 - A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program
14. Develop and implement a state-wide literacy awareness campaign.
15. Create a coalition of multiple stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, faith-based leaders, political leaders, representatives of media, government officials, and civic leaders within each district or county to work collaboratively and cooperatively to meet the literacy needs of all age groups.
16. Cultivate relationships with social service, health, religious, and cultural organizations that provide support for children and prospective parents. These relationships will encourage a close working relationship to promote literacy.
17. Provide high quality pre-school programs for all children.

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